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MASTERS
OF THE UNIVERSE
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The Thief of Castle Grayskull

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MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE™

The Thief of Castle Grayskull

by ROGER McKENZIE
illustrated by FRED CARRILLO

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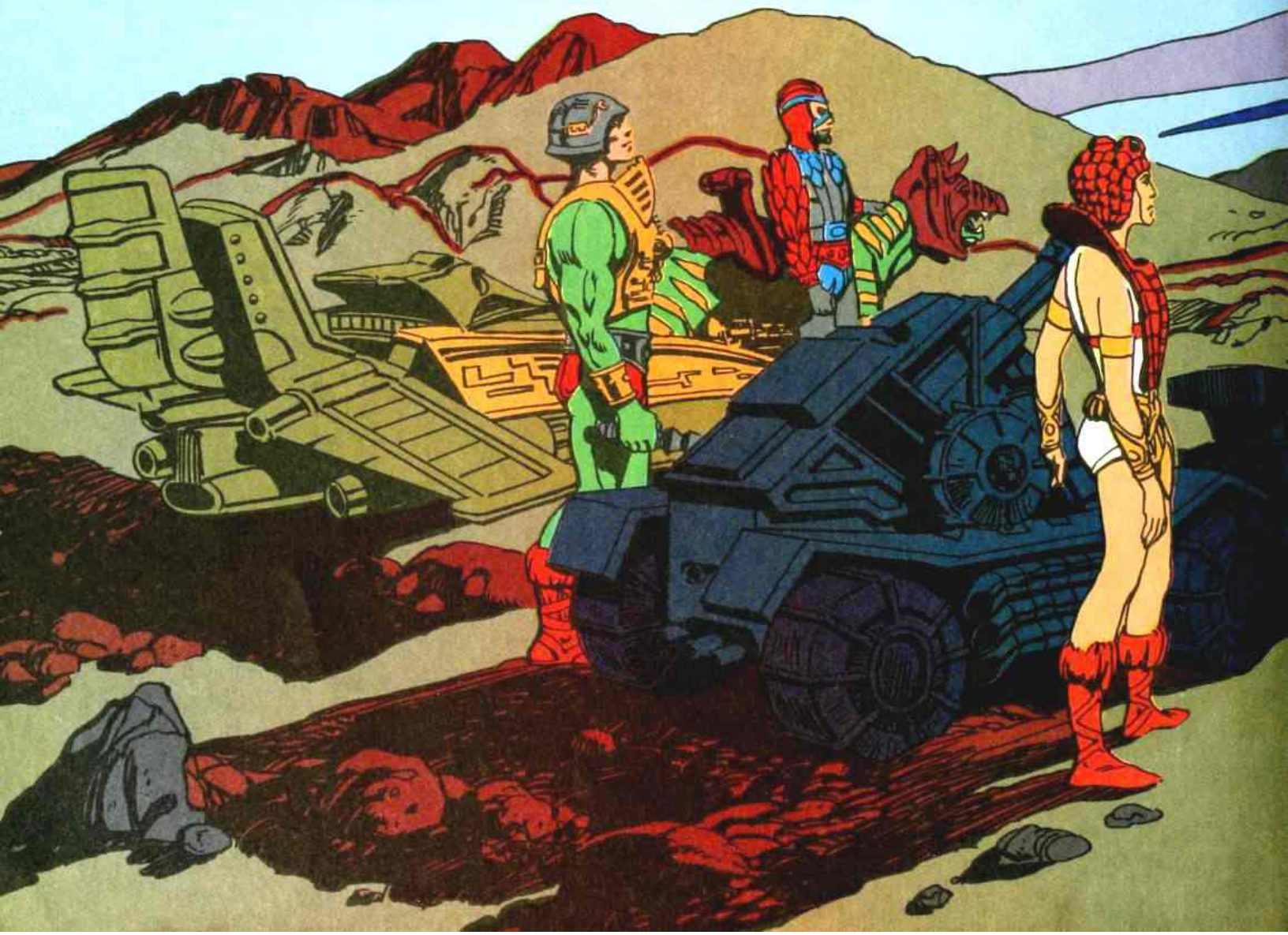
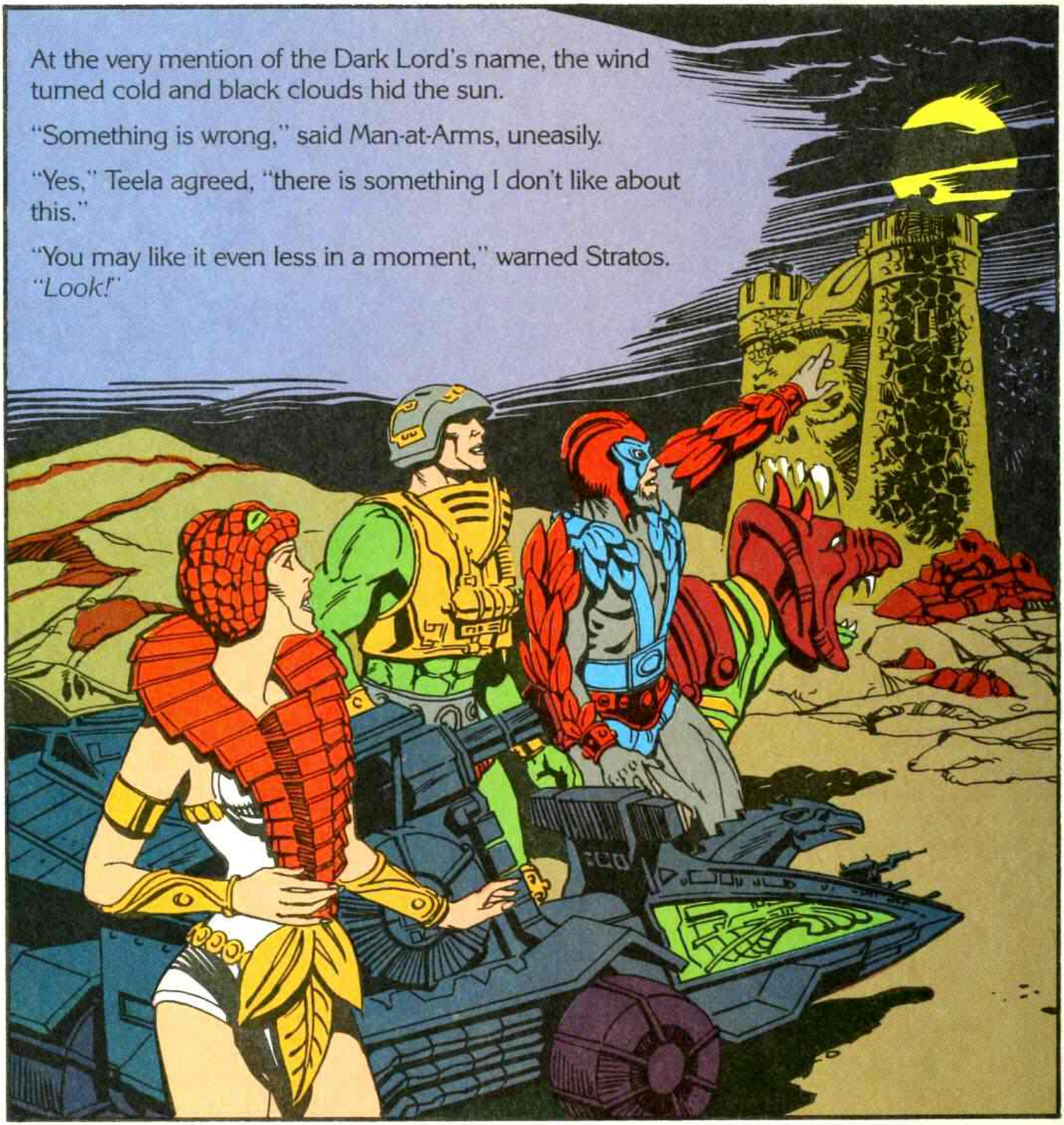
As evening approached on the planet Eternia, the Masters of the Universe – guardians of good – gathered outside of Castle Grayskull. Their leader He-Man spoke to them from atop a turret of the castle. "It is our duty to guard Castle Grayskull, and the secret locked inside, from the evil demon Skeletor!"

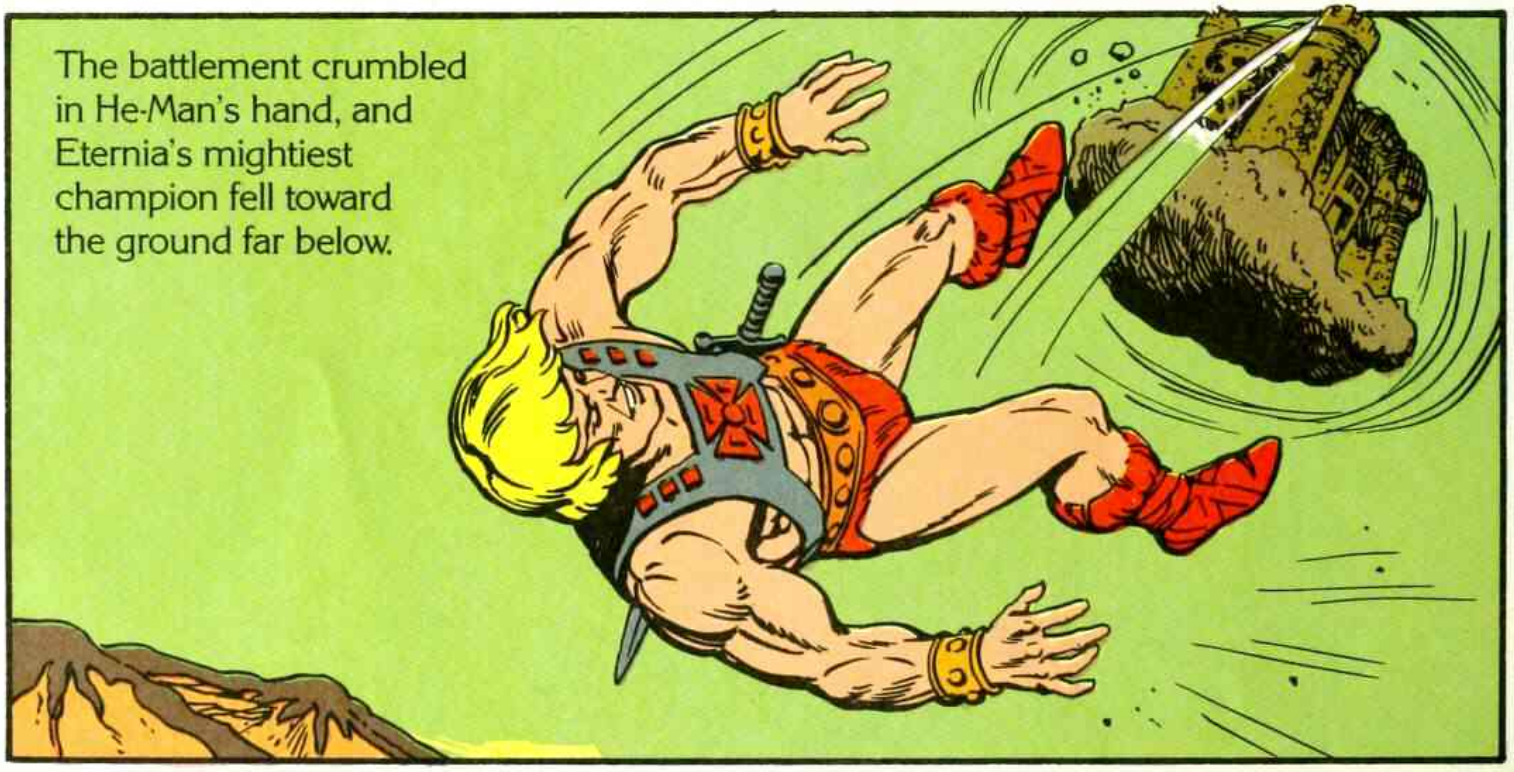


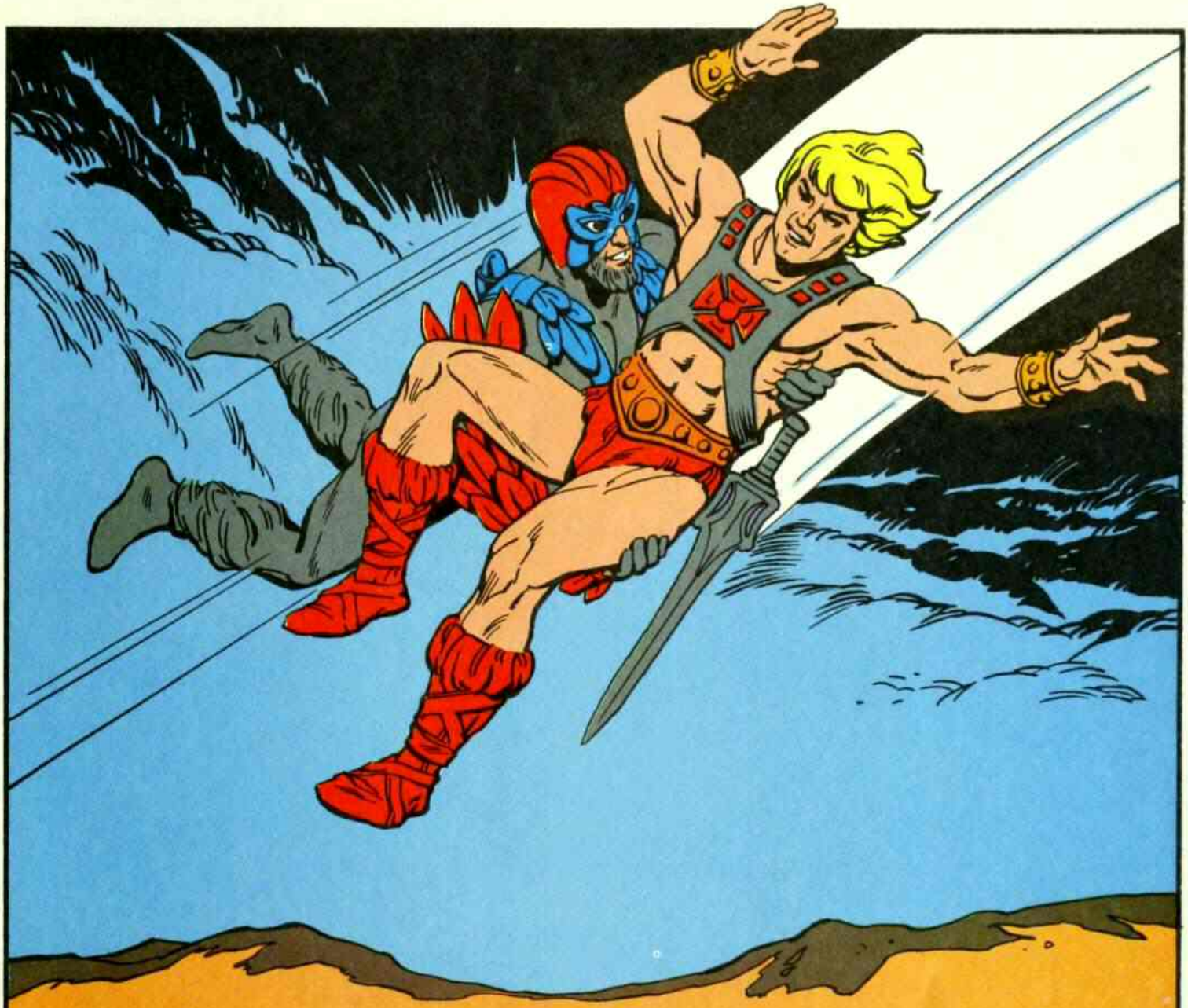

At the very mention of the Dark Lord's name, the wind turned cold and black clouds hid the sun.
"Something is wrong," said Man-at-Arms, uneasily.
"Yes," Teela agreed, "there is something I don't like about this."
"You may like it even less in a moment," warned Stratos. *"Look!"*

The Masters of the Universe glanced skyward. Skeletor's evil magic had made a terrible storm. A whirlwind ripped Castle Grayskull from its foundation and carried it high into the sky, taking He-Man with it.

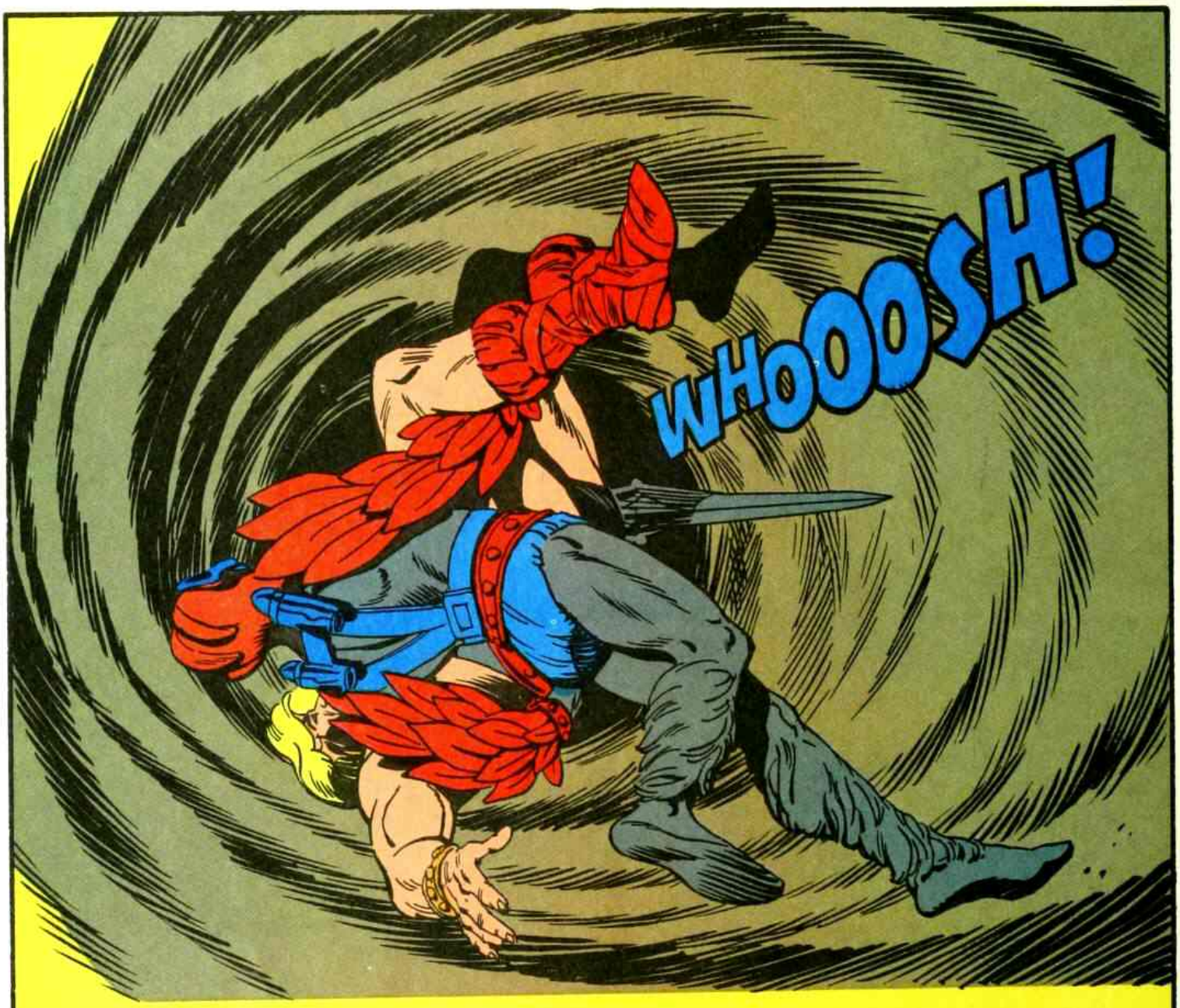
But even the strongest man in the universe was no match for the fury of Skeletor's storm winds.

The battlement crumbled in He-Man's hand, and Eternia's mightiest champion fell toward the ground far below.





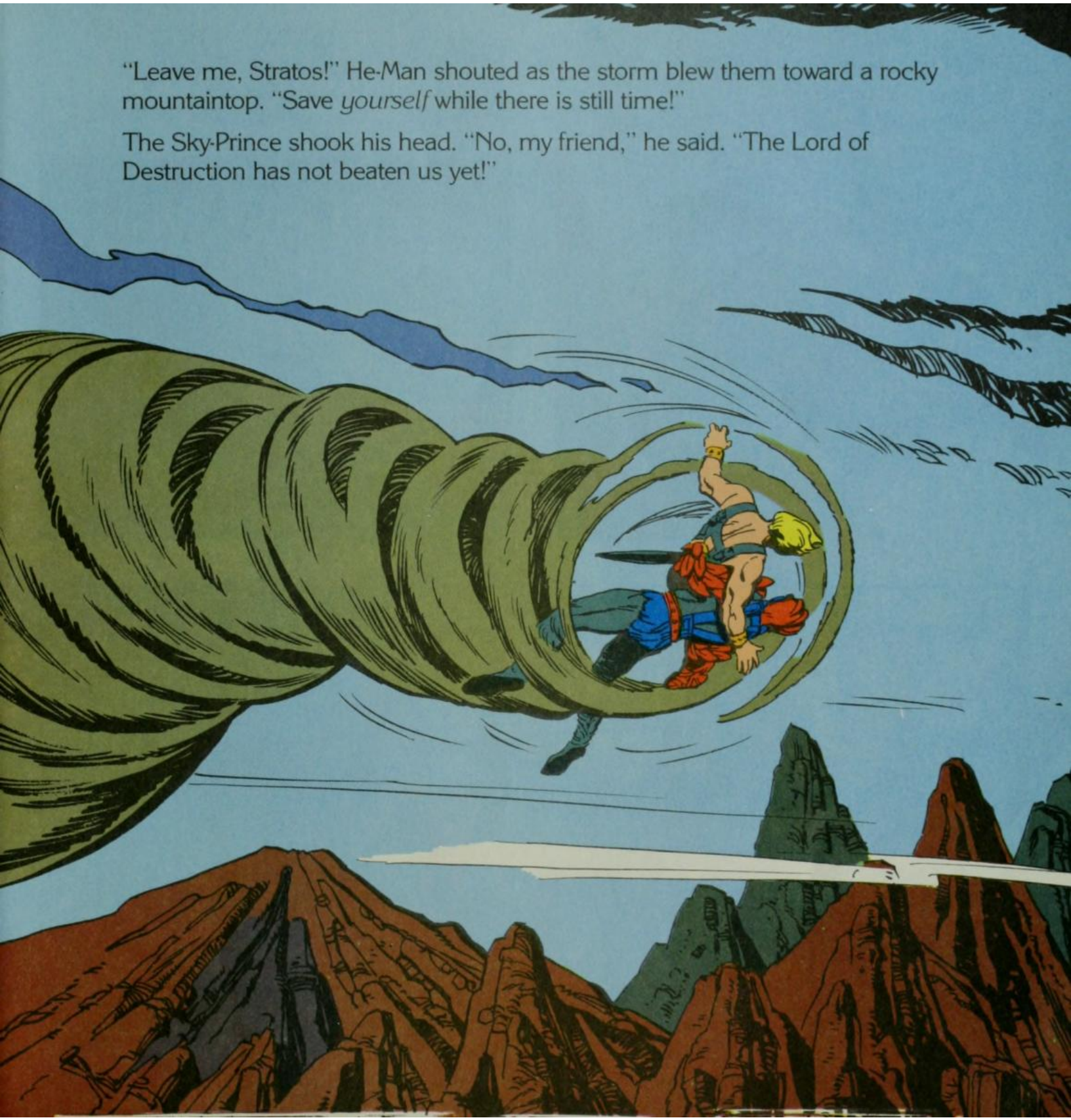
Putting his own safety aside, Stratos – Prince of the Skies – bounded into the air, flapping his mighty wings. Straining against the raging winds, he swooped high and caught He-Man just in time.



But the powerful winds were too strong for Stratos. The extra burden of He-Man's weight made it impossible for him to stay aloft. *Both* heroes were being sucked into the swirling vortex of the tornado.

"Leave me, Stratos!" He-Man shouted as the storm blew them toward a rocky mountaintop. "Save *yourself* while there is still time!"

The Sky-Prince shook his head. "No, my friend," he said. "The Lord of Destruction has not beaten us yet!"



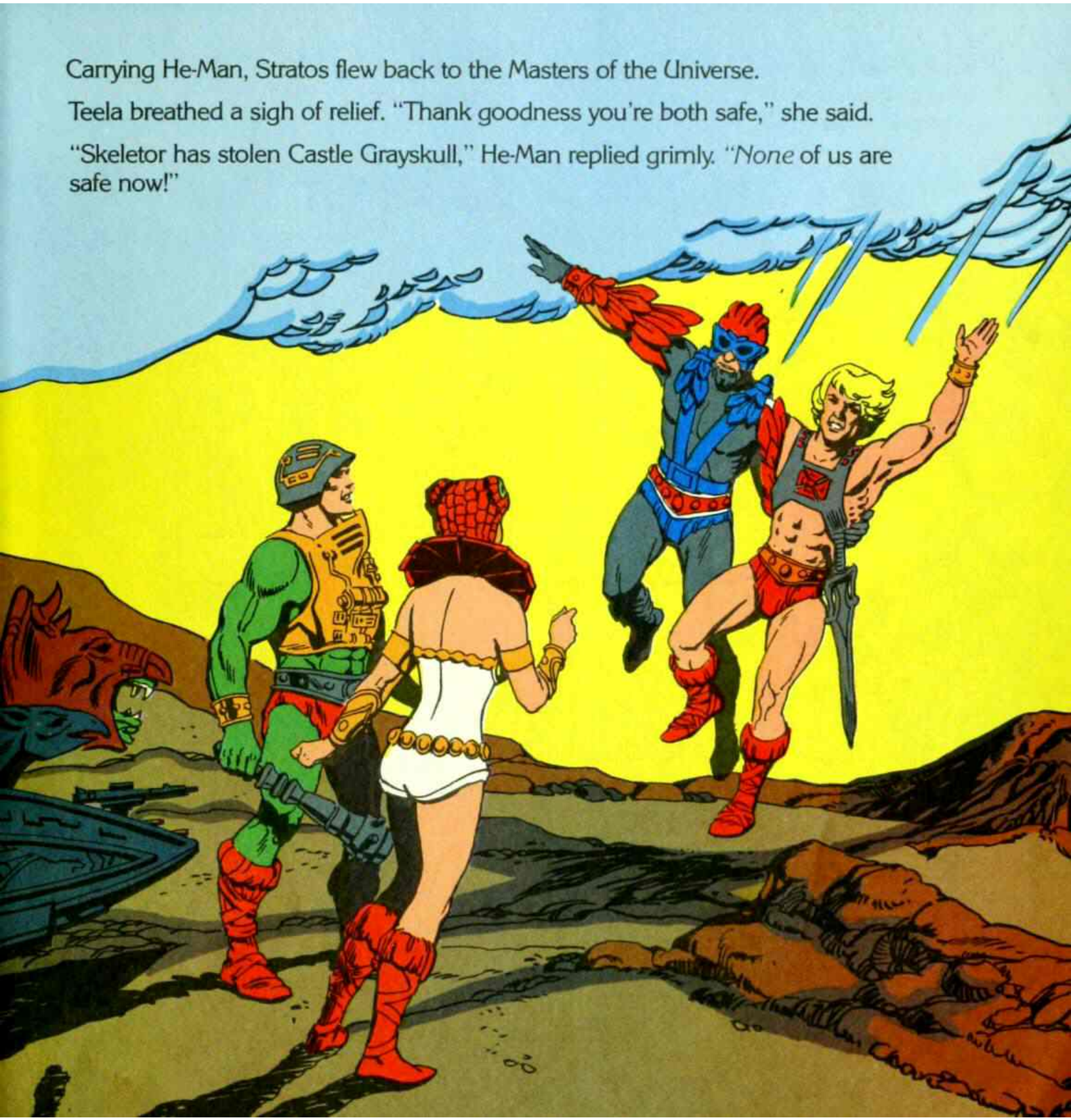
"Then hold tight," He-Man said as he drew his Sword of Power.

He drove the blade into the side of the mountain...

Carrying He-Man, Stratos flew back to the Masters of the Universe.

Teela breathed a sigh of relief. "Thank goodness you're both safe," she said.

"Skeletor has stolen Castle Grayskull," He-Man replied grimly. "*None* of us are safe now!"



At that very moment, far away in his lair deep inside Snake Mountain, Skeletor and his evil ally Beast Man were standing at the edge of a dark, watery pool. The images of the Masters of the Universe were reflected in the pool's magical depths.

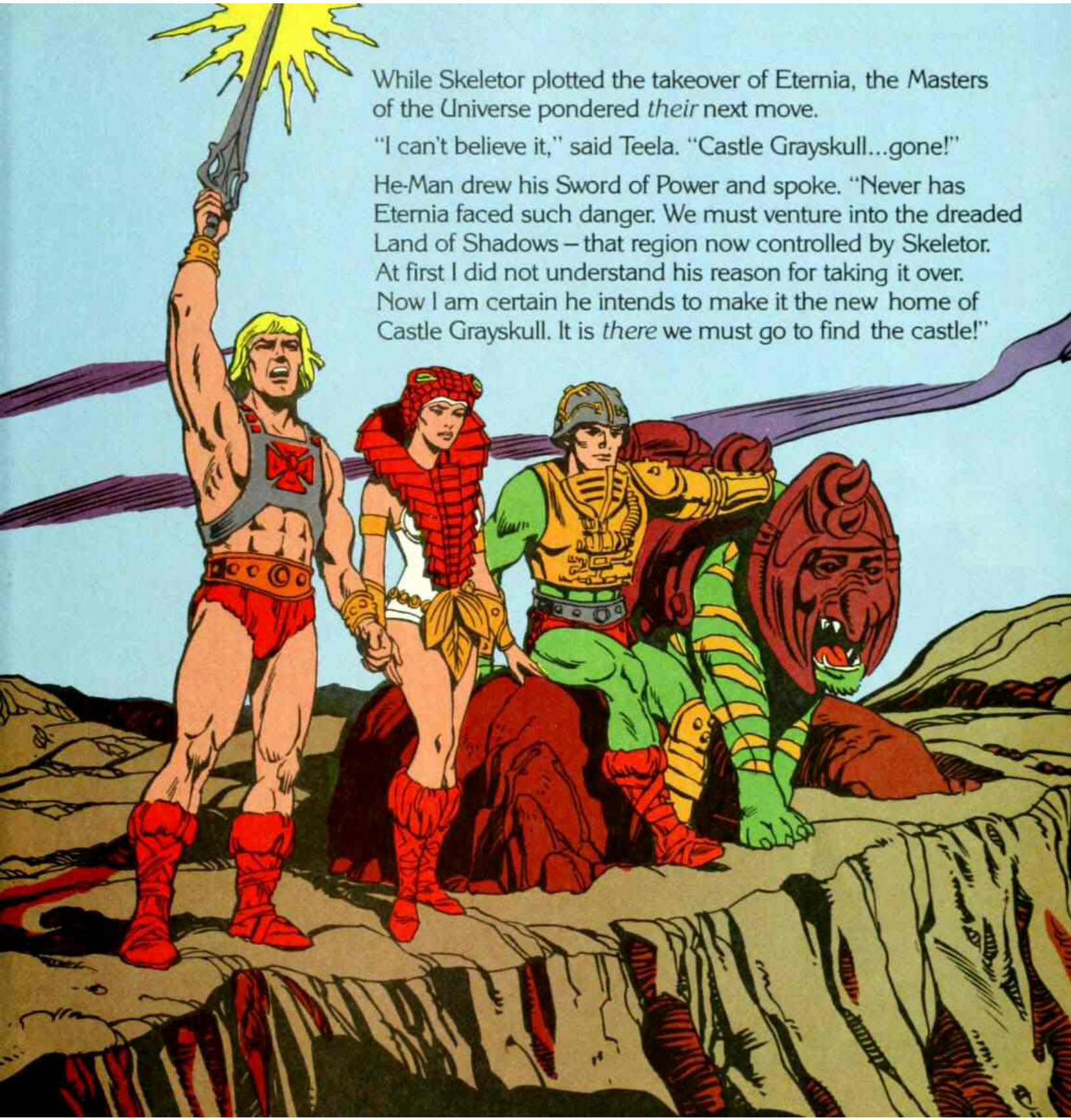
"The first part of my enchantment went perfectly," said Skeletor. "Now we must go to the Land of Shadows to complete the spell!"

Soon Skeletor and Beast Man arrived in the Land of Shadows. This was the place Skeletor had chosen to be the new home of Castle Grayskull.

The Lord of Destruction raised his arms toward the dark skies. To complete the theft of Castle Grayskull, he chanted an ancient spell.

"It worked!" Beast Man growled, as the Castle landed. "Castle Grayskull has been transported to the Land of Shadows!"

"Of course it worked, you fool," the Dark Lord hissed. "The Sorceress who lives in the castle and acts as its guardian was out on a mission. I seized the chance to steal the unprotected castle. But my work is not complete. He-Man will come looking for the castle. And when he does, he will be *mine!*"

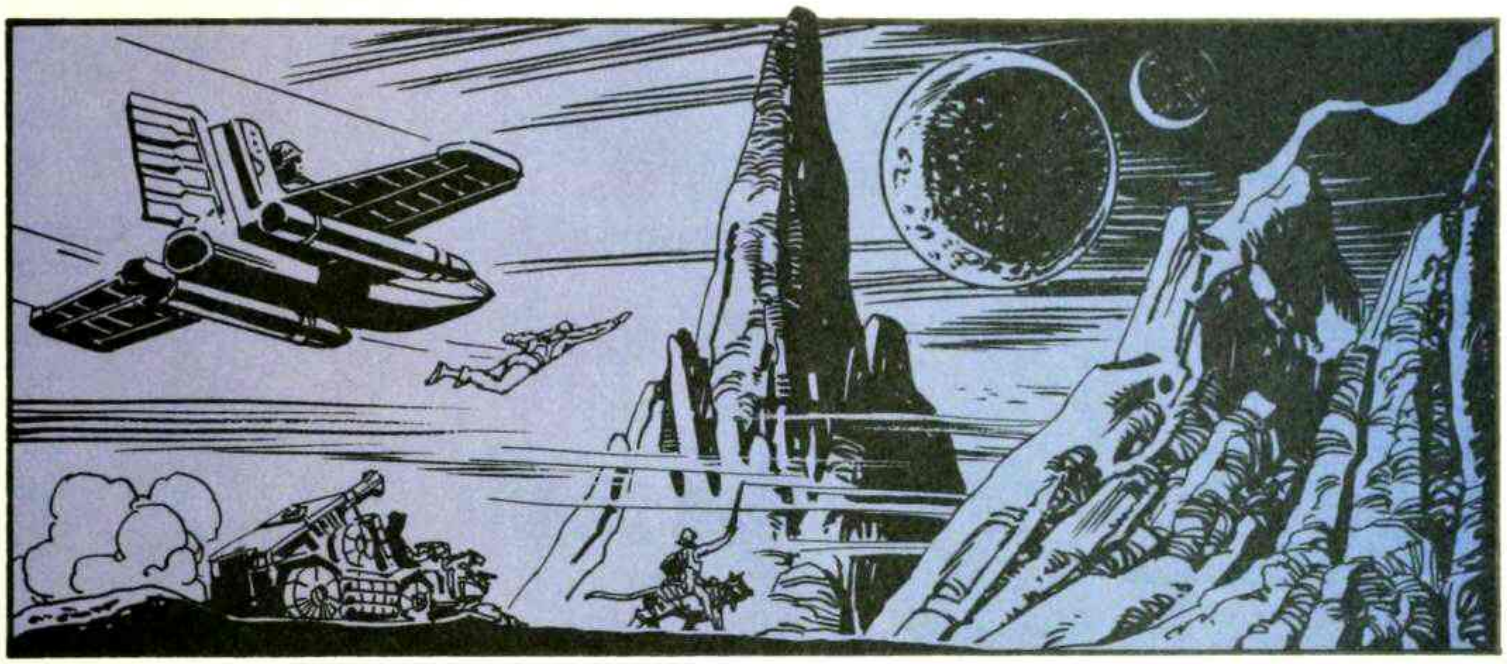


While Skeletor plotted the takeover of Eternia, the Masters of the Universe pondered *their* next move.

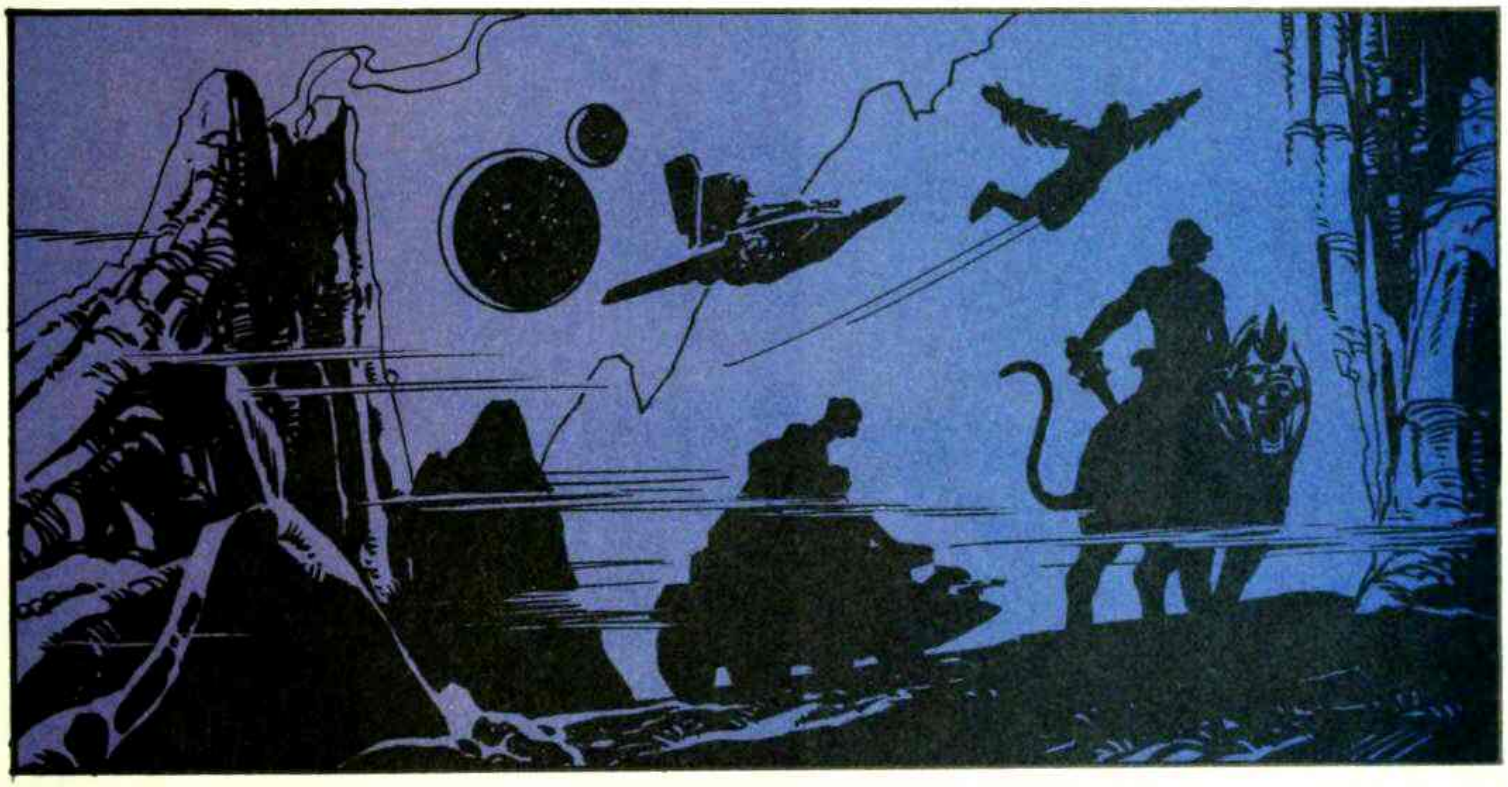
"I can't believe it," said Teela. "Castle Grayskull...gone!"

He-Man drew his Sword of Power and spoke. "Never has Eternia faced such danger. We must venture into the dreaded Land of Shadows – that region now controlled by Skeletor. At first I did not understand his reason for taking it over. Now I am certain he intends to make it the new home of Castle Grayskull. It is *there* we must go to find the castle!"

On Battle Cat, He-Man led the Masters of the Universe into the Land of Shadows – a land turned foul with Skeletor's evil. Nothing grew here anymore. The once fertile land lay barren.



On they pressed, deeper into the darkness. With each step the feeling of dread seemed to grow. Still they kept on searching for Skeletor and the stolen castle.



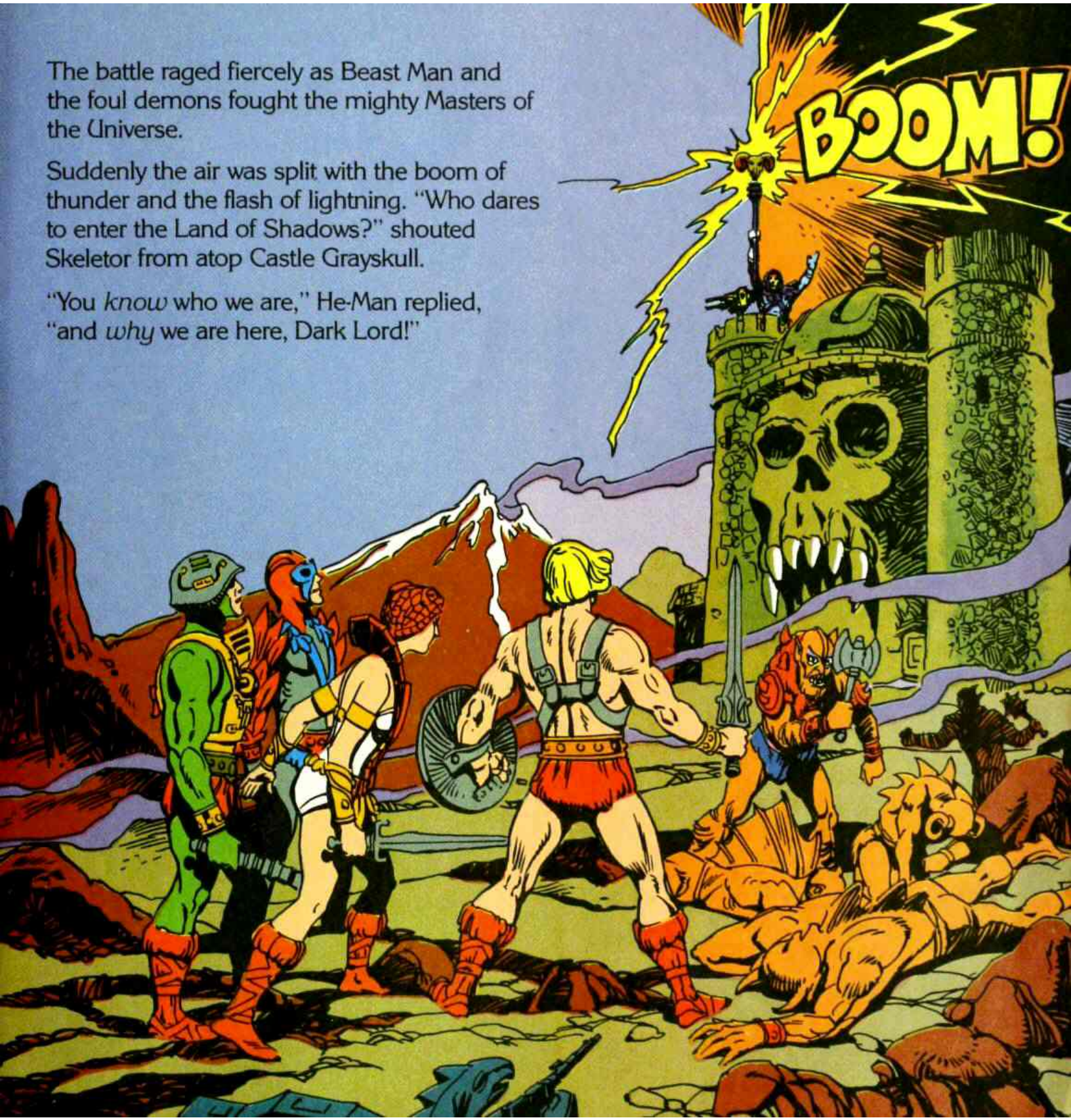
The quest was long, for the Land of Shadows was vast. The Masters of the Universe faced many hardships and covered much ground before they finally found Castle Grayskull. But their biggest challenge still awaited them.

"Stand fast!" He-Man commanded. "Beast Man leads a demon army against us!"

The battle raged fiercely as Beast Man and the foul demons fought the mighty Masters of the Universe.

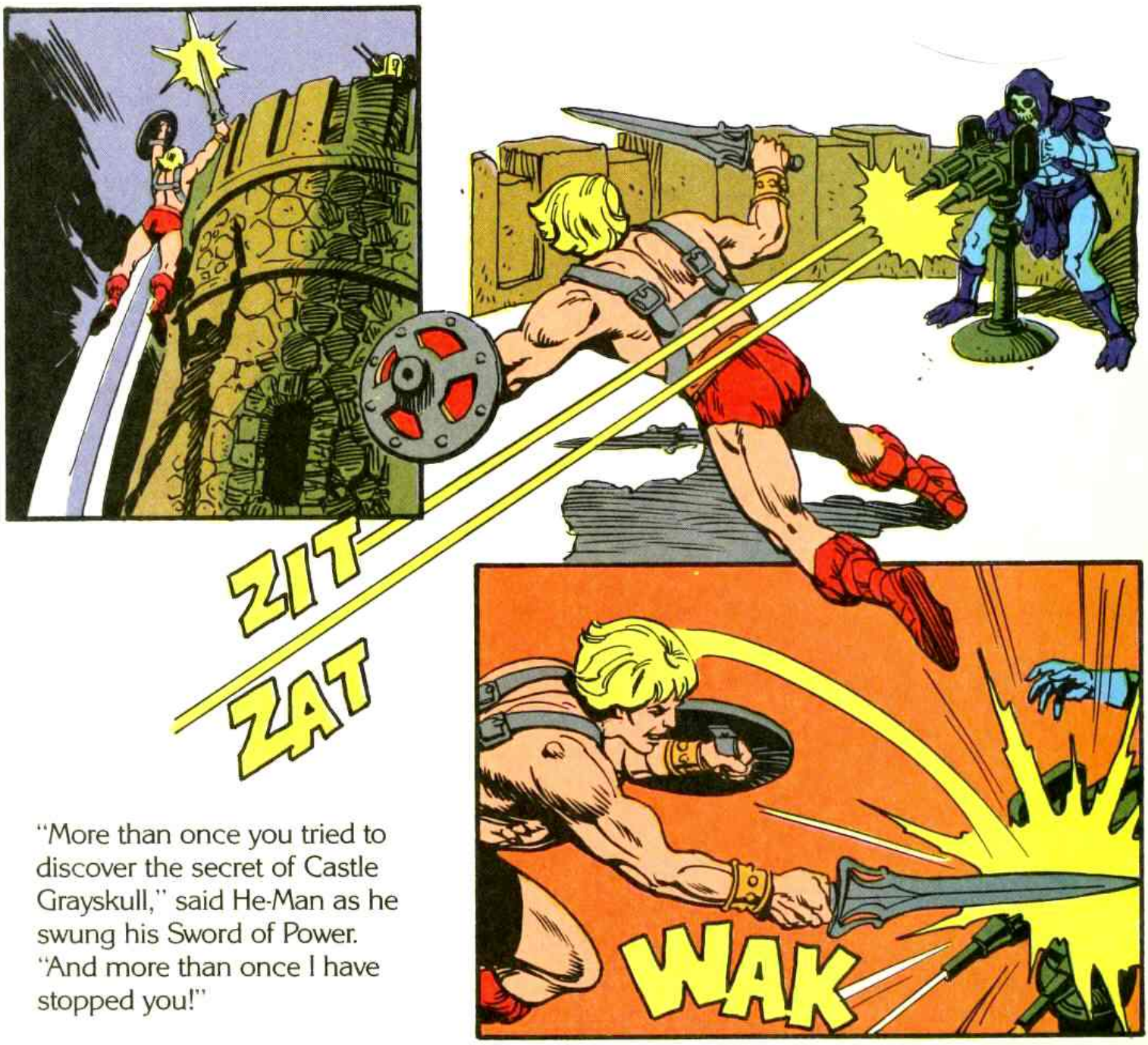
Suddenly the air was split with the boom of thunder and the flash of lightning. "Who dares to enter the Land of Shadows?" shouted Skeletor from atop Castle Grayskull.

"You *know* who we are," He-Man replied, "and *why* we are here, Dark Lord!"



Using his tremendous strength and agility, He-Man leaped atop the castle wall...

...but Skeletor acted quickly. "I have Castle Grayskull now, He-Man!" the Dark Lord boasted. "Soon I will unlock the secret within, and I will be Master of all Eternia!" With that, he fired the laser cannon.



"More than once you tried to discover the secret of Castle Grayskull," said He-Man as he swung his Sword of Power. "And more than once I have stopped you!"

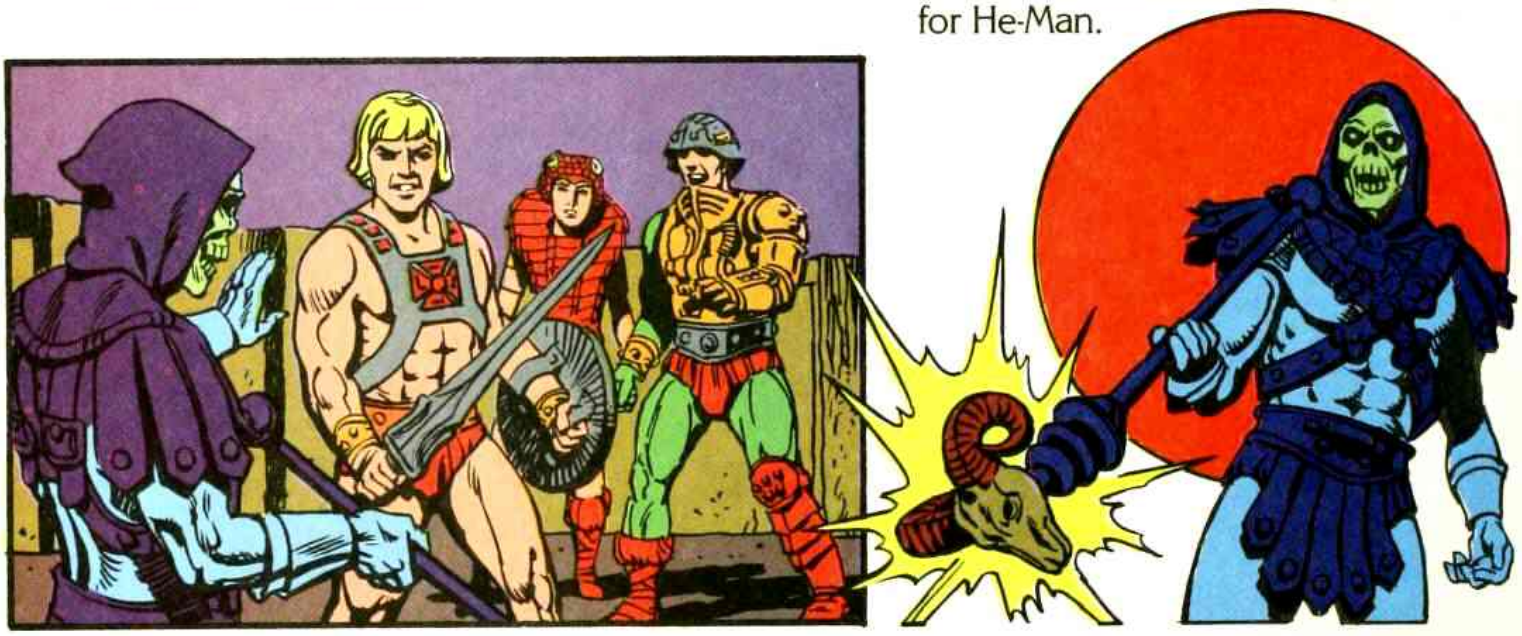
You cannot win, He-Man! I am the Lord of Destruction!
And WE are the Masters of the Universe— Defenders of Castle Grayskull!
CLANG!

Skeletor suddenly lowered his Havoc Staff. "Enough," he said. "I surrender."

"Be careful," warned Man-at-Arms. "This is some foul trick!"

"No trick," the Dark Lord hissed with an evil laugh. "Magic!"

An energy bolt flew from Skeletor's Havoc Staff, heading straight for He-Man.



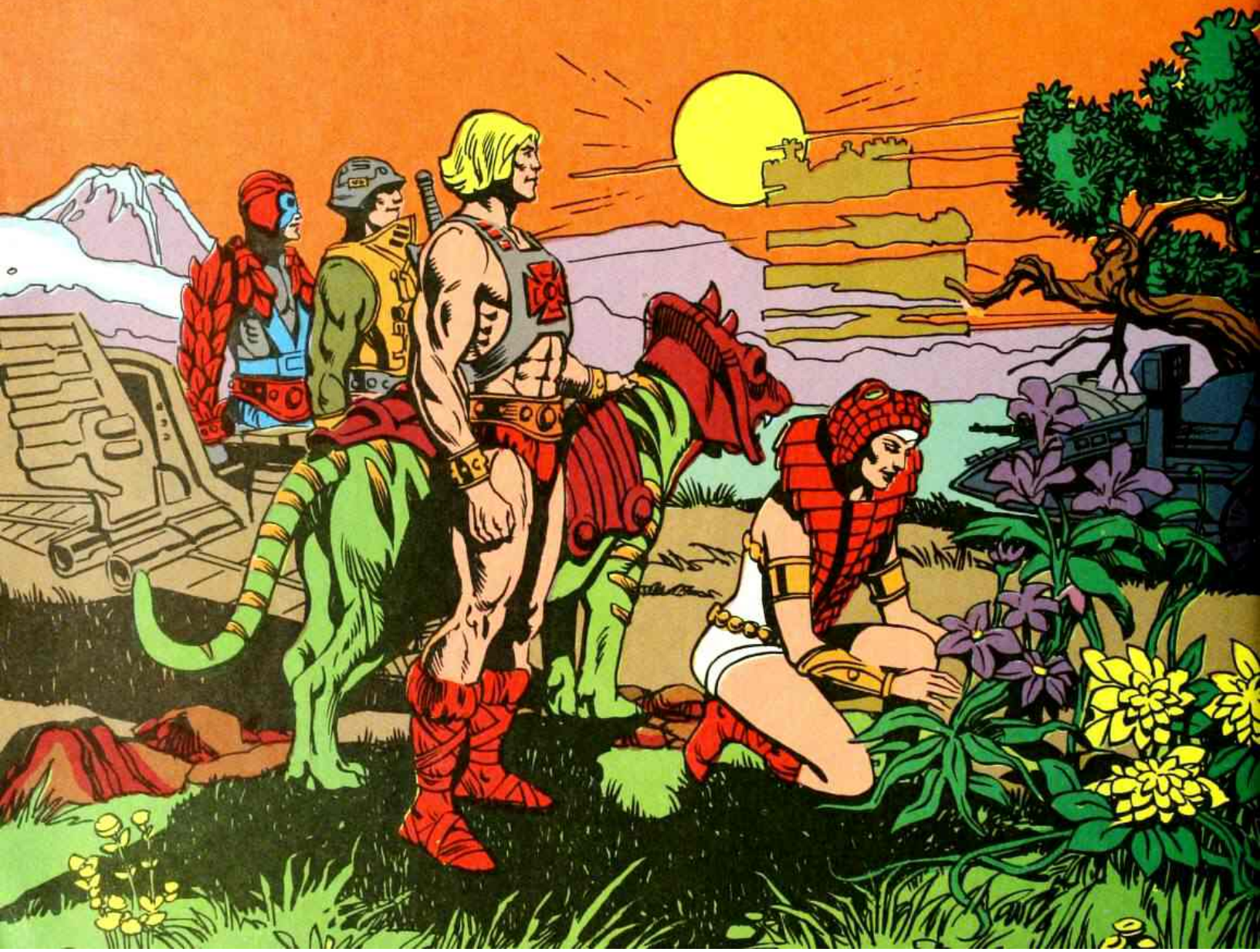
He-Man blocked the mystic bolt with his Sword of Power and turned Skeletor's evil magic against him!

Engulfed in his own wicked spell, Skeletor vanished in a burst of blinding light as the Masters of the Universe shielded their eyes.

With Skeletor gone, his hold over the Land of Shadows was broken. When his spell disappeared, Castle Grayskull faded from sight and returned to its original location. The sun came out and drove the demons away. The trees began to turn green, and the flowers began to bloom.

"Skeletor will move on," He-Man said. "There will be other Shadow Lands."

"Maybe," Teela responded, "but for now, the beauty has returned to *this* land."



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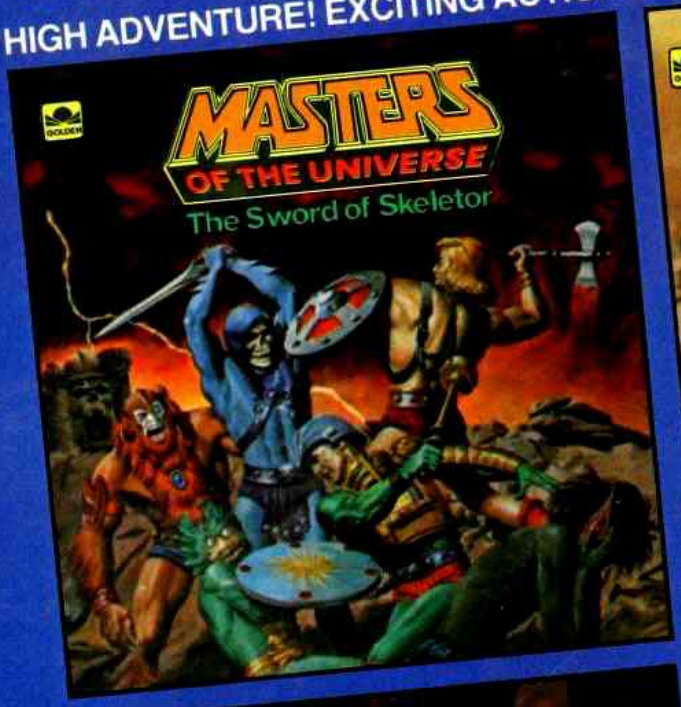

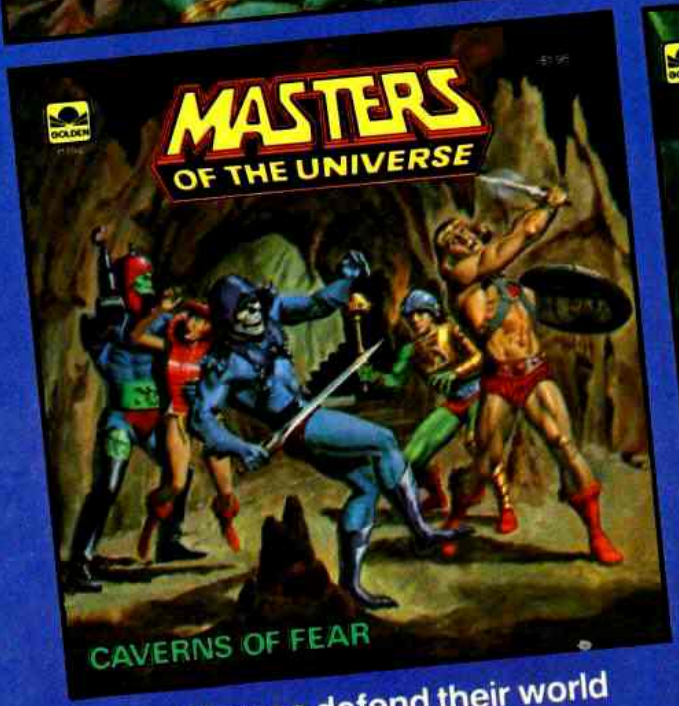

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